

IN THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listing of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

Claim 1 (canceled).

Claim 2 (previously presented): The method as recited in claim 11 wherein the number of image spots to be imaged in a surrounding area of a reference point is determined in an analysis of the image data represented in digital form as a bit field.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The method as recited in claim 11 further comprising a calibration step prior to the leaving in place step wherein at least one of a geometric shape and extent of the surrounding area, the geometric shape and extent of the boundary area, and the distance from a first reference point to a second reference point of the at least one reference point is determined.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The method as recited in claim 11 wherein the at least one reference point includes a plurality of reference points distributed in the image data in a uniform grid over a representation of a printing area of the printing form.

Claim 5 (previously presented): The method as recited in claim 11 wherein the distance from a first reference point to a second reference point of the at least one reference point matches an extent of the boundary area.

Claim 6 (previously presented): A system for digital imaging of printing forms in a method as recited in claim 11, the system comprising:

an energy source,

a cleaning unit,

a control unit, and

an image processing unit with a computing unit,
wherein in the computing unit of the image processing unit a program is executable, the program having at least one executable step determining whether the limit value has been exceeded at a number of positions in a bit field representing the image data in digital form, the positions corresponding to the reference points.

Claim 7 (original): The system as recited in claim 6 wherein the image processing unit includes a raster image processor and a data buffer for the image data represented in digital form as a bit field.

Claim 8 (original): The system as recited in claim 6 wherein the program has at least one executable step for modifying the bit field in at least one area at the positions at which the limit value is exceeded.

Claim 9 (original): A printing unit comprising a system for imaging as recited in claim 6.

Claim 10 (original): A printing press comprising a printing unit as recited in claim 9.

Claim 11 (previously presented): A method for digital imaging of a printing form through application of energy the method comprising the steps of:

establishing at least one reference point within image data of an image to be imaged onto a printing form and a limit value for a number of image spots within a surrounding area of the at least one reference point;

examining a plurality of image spots in the surrounding area of the at least one reference point in the image data and comparing the number of image spots to be imaged within the surrounding area with the limit value with the image processing unit;

modifying the image data to leave in place the at least one reference point as at least one supporting point if the number of image spots to be imaged in the surrounding area of the at least one reference point exceeds the limit value and a boundary area in the surrounding area around the at least one reference point contains only image spots to be imaged;

applying energy to create burn-off within the image spots around the at least one supporting point in a burn-off area; and
detaching burn-off from the burn-off area from the printing form in a cleaning step.

Claim 12 (canceled).